



# News Release

Office of the Louisiana State Fire Marshal  
8181 Independence Blvd.  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70806

---

---

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: "[www.dps.state.la.us/sfm/](http://www.dps.state.la.us/sfm/)"

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DATE: September 29, 2004**

**CONTACT: Nathan McCallum**  
**PH: 225-925-4911**  
**FAX: 225-929-7795**

**"FIRE PREVENTION WEEK" OCTOBER 3-9, 2004**

**2004 theme: "It's Fire Prevention Week, Test Your Smoke Alarms"**

Baton Rouge – Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco and The State Fire Marshal's Office have announced that the week of October 3-9, 2004 has been proclaimed "**Fire Prevention Week**". This year's theme, "It's Fire Prevention Week: Test Your Smoke Alarms," highlights the importance of all families installing and maintaining smoke alarms in the home. Smoke alarms are the most effective early warning device available for the home. Since they were introduced to consumers in the 1970s, they have helped to reduce the home fire death rate by one half. Even though they are now widely popular, roughly 70 percent of home fire deaths result from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.

Fires can spread through a home rapidly, and in some cases, individuals may have as little as two minutes to escape to safety once the alarm sounds. The State Fire Marshal's Office encourages residents to keep smoke alarms working and to leave immediately when a smoke alarm sounds.

Residents should learn to identify escape routes in the home and to choose an outside meeting place where everyone can gather after they've escaped. Practice ensures that everyone in the home knows the fire escape plan, they're familiar with the sound of the smoke alarm, and they know how to exit quickly.

Here are some key smoke alarm installation and maintenance tips:

- Install at least one smoke alarm on every level of the home and outside each separate sleeping area.
- Mount smoke alarms on ceilings or high walls.
- Test smoke alarms once a month, following the manufacturer's instructions.
- Replace batteries once a year or as soon as the device "chirps," indicating that the battery is low.
- Replace all smoke alarms after 10 years, even those that are hard-wired or smoke alarms with "long-life" (10-year) batteries. Smoke alarms with "long-life" (10-year) batteries also need to be replaced when the alarm "chirps" or fails to respond to periodic testing. The batteries in these units cannot be replaced.
- Alarms that are hard-wired to the home's electrical system should be installed by a qualified electrician.

To learn more about Fire Prevention Week, visit NFPA at [www.firepreventionweek.org](http://www.firepreventionweek.org).

NFPA has been the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week since 1922. The campaign's purpose is to raise public awareness about the dangers of fire, how to prevent it and how to be protected from it. Fire Prevention Week commemorates the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, in which more than 250 people died, 100,000 were left homeless and more than 17,400 structures were destroyed. Fire Prevention Week is the longest running public health and safety observance on record, according to the NFPA.